

# BANTHA TRACKS

JOURNAL OF THE OFFICIAL STAR WARS FAN CLUB

**S**ince the early days of movies, filmmakers have been exploring ways to solve the problem of concealing unwanted elements of a scene, and adding appropriate ones—while avoiding the time and expense involved in building another set or changing locations. The earliest attempt at this was the on-location technique of placing a pane of glass between camera and subject, then blocking, or 'matteing' out the unwanted portion, and painting in a substitute. By the late 1920's this glass shot was being combined with matte paintings done in a studio. Since then the matte painter has been a vital member of any special effects team, and has an increasingly important role to play as movie locales expand

*The movie opens with a series of four matte paintings which set the stage for the drama to follow . . .*

beyond the earth into imaginary galaxies.

The matte artists at Lucasfilm's Special Effects Facility, Industrial Light and Magic (ILM) are part of the artistic and technical collaboration which make it possible for the STAR WARS universe to exist.

JEDI was playing to enthusiastic audiences around the world when BANTHA TRACKS visited the

matte painters to discuss their work. In the matte photography room of the matte department, surrounded by racks of paintings, we met with Matte Painting Supervisor, Michael Pangrazio, and with Matte Artists Chris Evans and Frank Ordaz. The senior member of the team, Mike Pangrazio, was recruited to ILM by Joe Johnston, Visual Effects Art Director, on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. "The first thing I did here on EMPIRE," remembered Mike, "was not really a matte painting. I just flicked asteroids on a pane of painted glass using a

Left to right Chris Evans,  
Craig Barron, Mike Pangrazio, Frank Ordaz

Terry Chastner





toothbrush and white paint. I also did a lot of snow backgrounds for the AT-AT walkers."

Chris Evans had never seen a matte painting before he began work on JEDI. A UCLA Art Department graduate, Chris was inspired by the creativity in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK and thought it would be wonderful to be a part of the Lucasfilm artistic team. Through his persistence some slides of his work were sent up to Lucasfilm from the North Hollywood office and he followed soon after.

Frank Ordaz joined the ILM team when Mike found he needed another matte painter to work on JEDI. A recent graduate of Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Frank was working as a commercial artist when he was recommended to Mike by Art Center. Frank did a test painting of a photograph he was sent to copy and soon found himself working for George Lucas.

Many of the shots in JEDI could not have been done without using matte paintings. Some were very large and some small, besides docking bays, huge ships, and the Death Star, there were small paintings of sand to hide barge support poles, and ferns and foliage to hide biker tracks. They were each integrated with the other elements of a scene using the technique best suited to accomplish a smooth blend—front projection, rear projection, or latent image. The blending of the elements

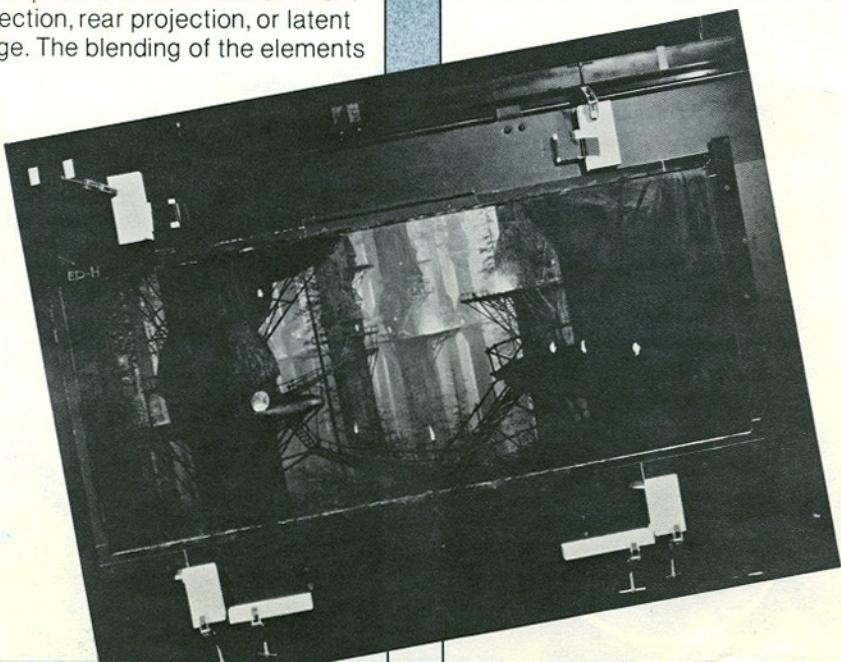
had to be seamless because as Mike said, "the concentration of the audience must not be broken, they must accept the continuity without question."

Our job is to please the producer, the director, or the effects supervisor," stated Mike. "That's right," said Chris, "what we do has to cut with what has been shot before and after the painting." Chris walked over to a matte painting of a forest scene, the Ewok village celebration scene. "The matte painting rescued this scene," recalled Chris. "The celebration scene with the fires was actually to be shot on the set in England. But when they got the film back, they found that they couldn't use it because when it was duped there were areas which looked like oatmeal mush, and other areas which were jet black. You couldn't see anything happening. Originally I was to paint a little thing here and there and I ended up by replacing the live action on that shot. The mood and coloring of the painting, kind of misty and blue, matches with the scenes of live action that come before and after, but now you can see what's going on." In the matte painting are some areas of clear glass which in the completed movie are filled with Ewoks dancing and moving around. Chris explained how this was done. "Imagine that a movie of dancing Ewoks is pro-

jected onto a screen which is the shape of the blank areas in the painting, and then the whole thing is re-photographed."

Craig Barron, matte photographer on JEDI had this to add.

"We have to blend the live action plate, say of the Ewoks dancing, with the matte painting so that the separate elements fuse into a homogenized shot. We get a key exposure for the painting and then match the correct exposure for the projected image of the Ewoks. The different methods we can use give us a lot of flexibility."



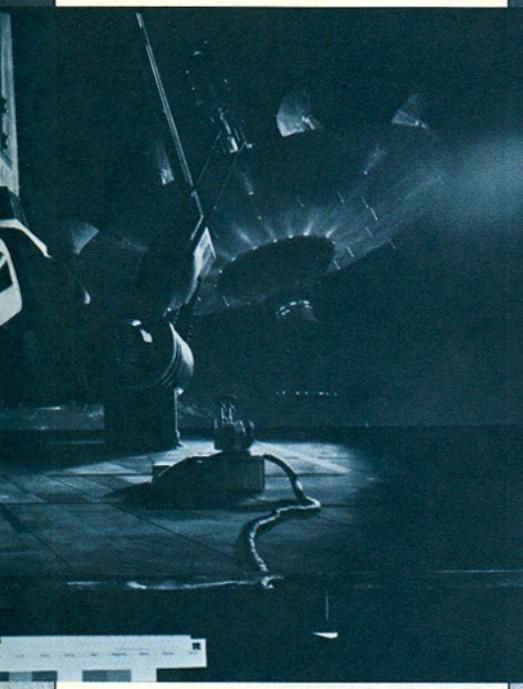
With front projection we can pan, which is focusing and moving the camera horizontally across the frame, or we can tilt which does the same thing vertically. With rear projection we have to use long exposures; but that technique lends itself well to a camera pullback." These tricks enhance the dynamic quality of a matte painted scene.

Mike pulled out the painting Frank did of the Death Star Docking Bay—one of the movie's opening shots in which Darth arrives to make an inspection of the construction in progress. "The scene looked costly," said Mike, "but the whole thing was actually



handled in the matte department. Only the center section with the ramp was real. We used a front projection technique in this show which worked very well."

Frank supplied more information about his painting. "For this particular Docking Bay scene I did one painting which involved using a plate of a semi-completed shuttle. It was the understanding that they would build most of the shuttle at EMI and then the matte painter would finish it by painting in the wings and that sort of thing. What actually happened



was that instead of trying to match the existing shuttle with a painted part, I just painted the whole shuttle."

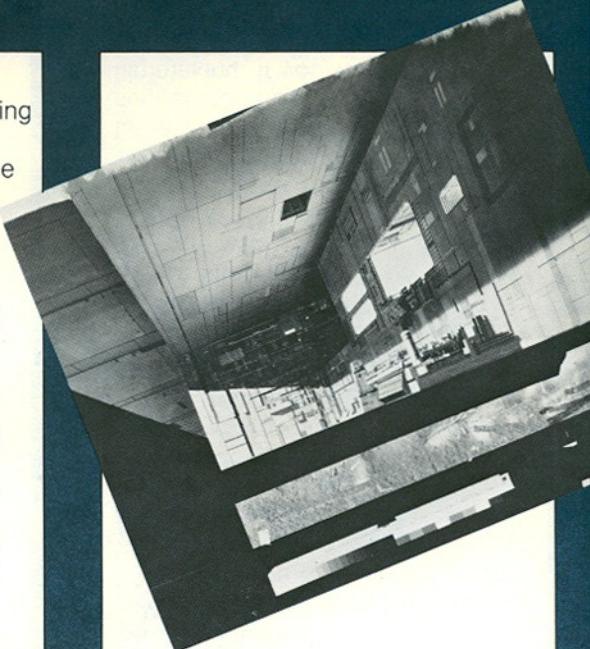
Chris observed that "whatever we paint has to look on film as if it has three-dimensional reality." Mike illustrated Chris's point by pulling out a painting of the Rebel Docking Bay. "Much of the reality of this shot," said Mike, "comes from the fact that it was inspired by an actual factory interior in a magazine photograph. One section of the factory ceiling had some pipes and unusual projections we wanted to use. In a case like that we just take our own slide projector and project that

shot onto the painting and paint it right out from that projection. This saves a lot of time and looks authentic. Ours is a very technical job really."

The discussion turned to the reasons why matte paintings, while looking 'real,' look different from ordinary paintings of the same subject matter. Frank explained. "Matte painting is artwork in conjunction with film. It's photographic in nature so it will blend with the live action photography plates. Film has a way of seeing a painting differently than the human eye. We adjust our technique to accommodate that difference." Mike added that "matte paintings may look super real to the naked eye because they tend to be painted hotter, that is, brighter, and then printed down later in the photography department. That method works better as far as approaching reality is concerned."

Chris described how they get started in the matte department. "George will have a scene in mind which he'll explain to Joe Johnston (Effects Art Director on JEDI.) Joe will do a little sketch based on what George imagines the scene to look like. We will then get a copy of that sketch, along with the storyboard, and the live action plate. Once we have that basic information we can begin the actual painting. We usually use acrylic paint for a quick lay-in because it's fast and dries quickly. We send this rough work downstairs to Craig to photograph in with the live action section. The next day we analyze it and maybe decide to move this tree to the right six inches, or change the composition in some other way; and of course we continually check the color and try to pull it back if it is going off. We look for anything that is off."

If the desired three-dimensional quality of an object in a painting isn't right, it may be due to an inaccurate rendering of the way light strikes it. Frank describes how the department handles that problem with an object or group



of objects in a painting. "If the shuttle, for instance, looks too flat, what we'll do is build some miniatures, some actual models. We'll light and photograph them so we can observe how the shadows lie. Then we work from photographs of our own groupings of lighted models."

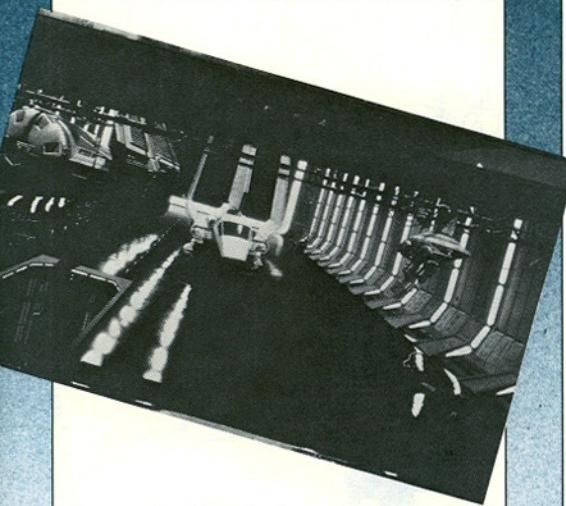
Chris remarked that at some point in a painting's progression George will come up to see how they are doing. "There's room for input on our part. Sometimes the mood or feeling of the scene is not totally defined until we are finished with the painting. If we're heading in the wrong direction George may guide us by saying, 'make the sky and the sunset redder,' or 'that figure should be larger,' things like that. George knows what is needed in a shot to maintain his objective, the telling of the story. He leads you to bring your best creative effort to that telling. He delegates responsibility and trusts you'll succeed. It works. People actually do perform very well."

Mike explained the next stage. "When we are happy with the composition and the colors we might go to oil paints. We use both. Oils dry more slowly but are more accurate for the camera than acrylics so we often choose them for the final painting. Acrylics photograph differently than they look to the naked eye. With oils the camera picks up



pretty much the same thing as the human eye."

The sophistication of the techniques employed in a successful matte painting grow with each new challenge; and the role of the matte painter increases with each movie that uses them. As the STAR WARS series progressed matte paintings played an increasingly important role. STAR WARS got its original 'look' primarily from the production paintings of Ralph McQuarrie. The STAR WARS universe retains that look to a great extent. The matte painters' role in the making of the first two movies did not really begin until principal photography was underway and there was footage to build on. In JEDI there was more, and earlier, conceptual input on the part of the matte painters in creating the settings and the look of the film. Mike believes that matte painters will become more and more involved



in production design as a way of preparing for the successful completion of the matte painting elements of a film.

Although the demand for matte painters has escalated throughout the film industry in recent years, there is no direct training in the process per se. Chris elaborated. "There is no matte painting school. Even people in the film industry are often unaware of the role of the matte painter. When I was in the Art Department at UCLA I had a friend who was a film major at the graduate level

who knew about matte painting, but had never thought to mention matte painting as a career to me. He thought of a matte painter as a kind of historical aspect of film."

Frank recalled similar experiences. "At UCLA I majored in art and took a minor in cinema which included a special effects course. Later at the Art Center I tried everything. They offered a curriculum which covered all types of commercial art from storyboards to fine art paintings. I couldn't zero in on anything specific though. I always wanted to do something new. I just kept playing around with different techniques."

Mike relates a different background and point of view. "I basically taught myself. I followed my own intuition and did my own training. I learned how to use each tool, like the airbrush, and disciplined myself. The basis of my training was looking at and studying nature. I did realistic landscapes with surrealistic touches. Whatever pleased me. The solid basis of my training was nature. I didn't realize it at the time, but it was exactly the kind of training I needed to do the work I do now."

Mike thinks that many artists who aspire to be matte painters have a misunderstanding of what it takes. "Our paintings are not fantasy illustrations by any means. An artist who wants to train himself for matte painting will do better to try to copy a photograph that duplicates a

natural scene very accurately. The discipline of copying reality is the best training."

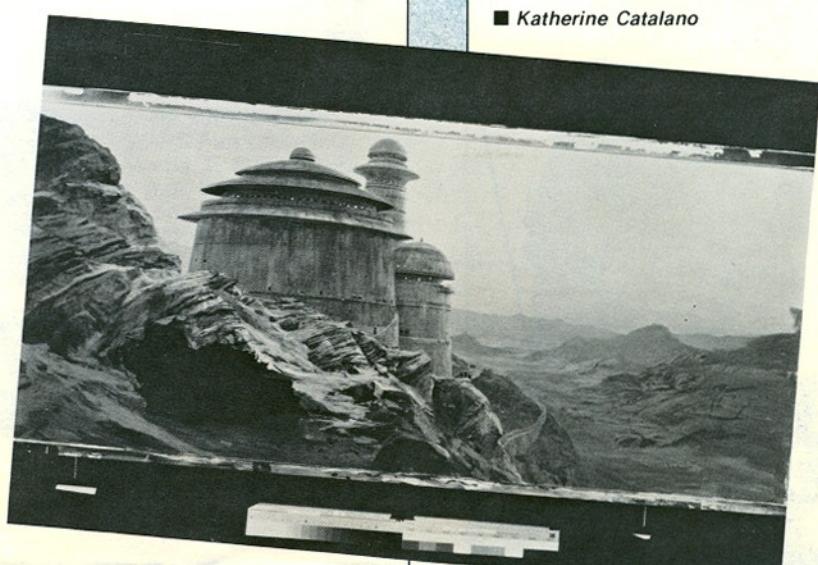
Chris agreed and pointed out that, "whether or not you are in a formal education system, you have to be independent of every system except that of nature. If I were to give advice to aspiring matte painters it would be to let nature be your teacher."

Mike agreed with one exception. "As a self-trained artist I can tell you that perspective is very hard to teach yourself. It's all mathematics. Kids who are interested in the field should find themselves a good teacher for perspective. Perspective is even more important in matte paintings than in regular works because we are painting for film lenses and we have to adjust perspective for that."

For kids who want to experiment in training themselves, the matte painters advise using illustration board to work on. Glass isn't necessary. Even cardboard will do well, they say. "Don't start painting on Mom's windows," warns Mike, "and be very careful about using acrylic paints—they're toxic and there usually are no warnings about that on the labels."

"I still feel like a student myself," Chris said. "Especially when we are all working on a project together. I'm learning every day. We learn from our mistakes and from each other here in the matte department. We're all members of a creative team."

■ Katherine Catalano



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\*The ROTJ one-sheet, B-sheet, Japanese half-sheets and TEMPLE OF DOOM one-sheet must be paid for with a separate check in the event that they are sold out and we must return the payment to you.

## Return of the Jedi Poster Album

The RETURN OF THE JEDI Poster Album offers a double treat for STAR WARS Saga fans. It's the Who's-Who of RETURN OF THE JEDI, and a mini-guide to how the movie was made. One side of the Poster displays sixty-two color photos of the stars in your favorite scenes from all three movies. The flip side features photos of more than forty members of the cast and crew at work on JEDI, with their biographies and contributions to the making of the movie.



The RETURN OF THE JEDI Poster Album unfolds to a generous 22" by 34". It is an exclusive publication of the Official STAR WARS Fan Club.

Price: \$5.00 postpaid

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LF NEWS

## INDY II Update

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM continues the cinematic adventures of the hero of Oscar winner RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK. The first INDY II trailer is included on the RAIDERS videotape. The most recent trailer is showing in theaters now. Watch for it.

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM is a Lucasfilm Ltd. production directed by Steven Spielberg, produced by Robert Watts with George Lucas and Frank Marshall as executive producers; Kathleen Kennedy is the associate producer. Douglas Slocombe is the director of photography and the production is designed by Elliot Scott. The screenplay is written by William Huyck and Gloria Katz from a story by George Lucas. INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM is a Paramount Pictures release for May 23, 1984.

*Leading lady Kate Capshaw as Willie Scott at the maharajah's palace in one of the dazzling wardrobe creations of Oscar winning costume designer Anthony Powell.*



## Lucasfilm Goes Video

To your left, amidst the whine of turbine engines and the concussions of explosions near and far, someone is thinking . . .

Hurtling at 575 klicks through the corrosive brown atmosphere, just barely skimming over the ragged mountain tops and making hairpin turns within inches of the rock walls to follow the winding canyons may not be the most relaxing way to find where your buddy's ship crashed, but at least you get a chance to dodge the automated laser-gun turrets and the patrolling alien ships—and anyway, it sure beats walking! . . . KA-BOOM! That was close!

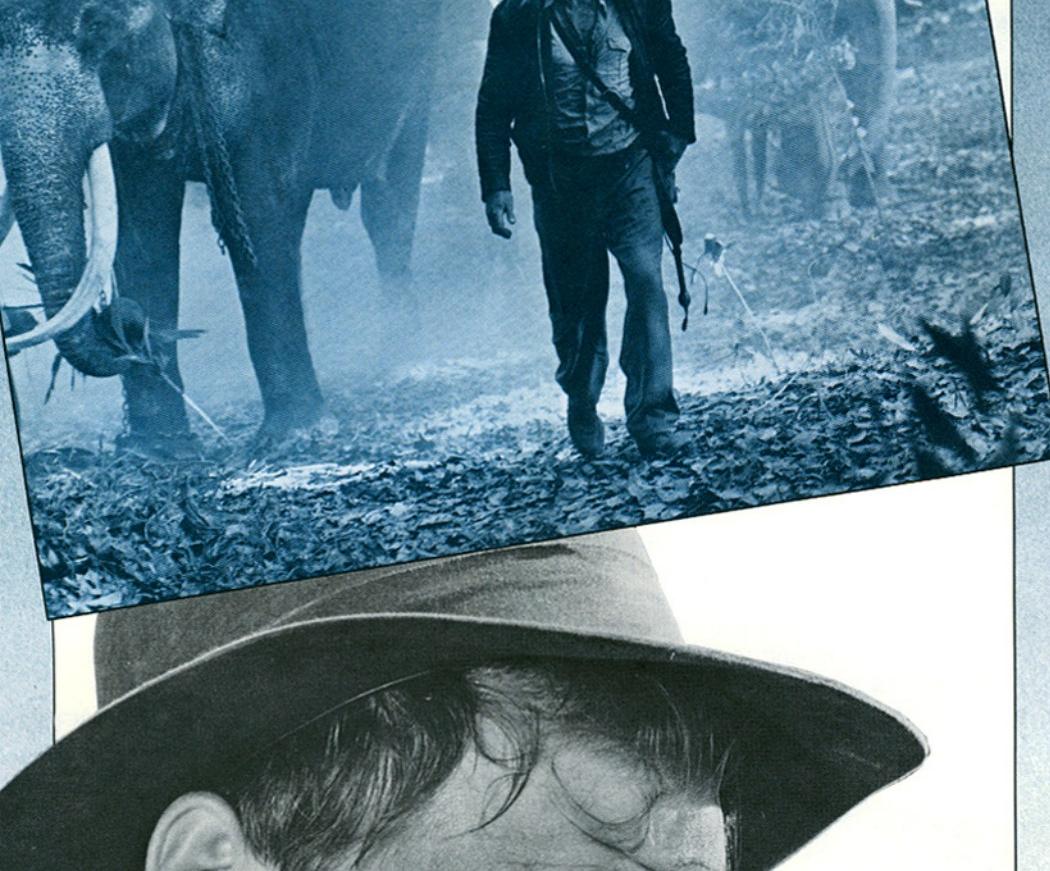
While to your right, almost drowned out by an up-tempo rhythmic sound like robots improvising jazz, someone is muttering . . .

All I need to do is sneak around this guy and make that long, three point shot in the next 10 seconds... Unghh- He must be psychic the way he guesses everything I'm gonna do! Maybe I better just try to hold on and push him back enough to get an easy two-pointer and then go for a quick kill in sudden-death overtime. Oh no! Now I've only got 2.8 seconds! Arrghh! Are you in a galaxy far, far away? No.

Are you at some ancient Greek sporting event? No.

Are you on the sound stage at the filming of some time travel epic? No. But you're getting warmer.

*Scenes filmed on the island of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) in 1983 are the movie locale of northern India in the 1930's. Here archeologist-adventurer Indiana Jones leads his elephant convoy on their journey through the jungle to the Palace of Pankot.*



You're in the office of Peter Langston, head of Lucasfilm's new Games Department. Along with the other members of the department, David Fox, Charlie Kellner, David Levine, and Gary Winnick and a member of the Lucasfilm Computer Graphics Department, Loren Carpenter, you've been testing two new games soon to be released by ATARI/LUCASFILM.

The first game is a fast-paced space adventure that was designed and written by a team consisting of David (Fox), Loren, Charlie, Peter, and Gary. It uses a sophisticated graphics technique, based on a mathematical concept called "fractals," for drawing realistic landscapes as you fly

through them!

Loren Carpenter



pioneered the use of this technique in the "Genesis Effect" sequence in Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. This is the first use of "fractals" in a video game.

The other game is an innovative, exhilarating sport that was designed and written by David (Levine) and Peter with contributions from a consulting firm called "Search & Design Media." It is a unique, two-person, one-on-one game that is played with armored vehicles on a futuristic "field of forces." This is the first video game to use "anti-aliasing" techniques (which improve picture realism) similar to those used in very high quality computer image generation for motion pictures. The screen view is unbelievably realistic!

Both games make exciting use of sound effects and music. In the space adventure game every gauge and indicator on the cockpit control panel and every event that takes place has its own realistic sound, making the experience of flying uncannily realistic. When you play it you are there! In the sports game the upbeat music draws you into the excitement of the game and gives you important information about what's happening around you. The music in this game represents another first in that it actually improvises on a theme using "riffs" contributed by famous musicians from all over the United States.

Both the space adventure game and the sports game will be available soon as cartridges for the ATARI 400, 800, and XL Home Computers and for the ATARI 5200 Super System.

I wonder what they'll do next . . .

■ Peter Langston

*Cast and crew of INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM spent three intensive months filming at EMI Elstree studios in England. Virtually every stage, including the vast STAR WARS stage, was used for building the spectacular interior sets. Among those taking a break from shooting on one of the four outdoor sets constructed on the backlot at EMI are Harrison Ford seated on the camera dolly, Director Steven Spielberg leaning on the camera, and Assistant Director David Tomblin with the bullhorn.*







## Message from the Director

Surprise! We hope you like the expanded newsletter. To keep it going bigger and better, we have asked for even more member participation. 1984 is going to be a great, big wonderful year and you are an important part of it.

May 23, 1984 marks the premiere of INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM. We are very excited about the continuing saga of Indiana Jones. The May issue will contain an in-depth interview with Robert Watts, the producer of INDY II. It will be mailed on May 23rd to coincide with the release of INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM.

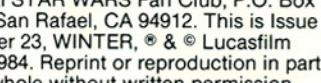
### 1984 Renewals

Beginning in February, all 1984 renewals will receive a very special Lucasfilm Production renewal kit. Created exclusively for Fan Club members, the kit contains unique items from the STAR WARS Saga, RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK and the upcoming INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM.

Many exciting things are in the making for 1984. As C-3PO says, "Don't deactivate!" Stay with us for the adventures to come.

May the Force be with you!

Maureen Garrett  
Fan Club Director  
Lucasfilm Ltd.



Kumi ©

**BANTHA TRACKS**, the Journal of the OSWFC is published quarterly by the Official STAR WARS Fan Club, P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, CA 94912. This is Issue Number 23, WINTER, ® & © Lucasfilm Ltd., 1984. Reprint or reproduction in part or in whole without written permission from the publisher is strictly forbidden.

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### Special Services

#### HOW TO WRITE TO US

Letters to the editor, pen pals, cast and crew fan mail, requests for special effects information, costuming guidelines, science fiction convention listings, club info: Official STAR WARS Fan Club, P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, CA 94912 U.S.A.

#### VERY VERY IMPORTANT!

Please remember to include your NAME, ADDRESS, and FORCE NUMBER (if you can) each time you write to us. Many times we can't respond to a wonderful drawing or urgent request for information because, being in a hurry to get something in the mail, people forget to tell us who it's from. This is frustrating for all of us!

#### PEN PAL SERVICE

If you are interested in having a pen pal, send a long, self-addressed stamped envelope to the Fan Club. Please write "Pen Pal" on the outer envelope.

#### CAST AND CREW FAN MAIL FORWARDING

If you wish to write a letter to the members of the cast and/or crew of any Lucasfilm Production, you can send your letter to them in care of the OSWFC, P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, CA 94912. We will do our best to make sure the particular person or their representative will see it. However, we are not able to promise you an answer to your letter.

Please bear in mind the STAR WARS cast and crew are extremely busy with their film careers and personal lives.

Be sure to address your letter to the actor or crewperson to whom you are writing—being sure to put only one person's name on it. If you want to write to Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher, for example, send two separate letters. Also make sure that you put your entire address in the body of the letter, not just on the envelope.

#### Customer Service

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#### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

New Members will receive the JEDI kit and a year's subscription to BANTHA TRACKS. Fees are \$6.00 (\$7.00 Canada, \$8.00 Foreign).

Please allow 4-8 weeks for delivery.

### RENEWALS

Renewing members: you will be sent a renewal notice before you receive the last BANTHA TRACKS of your subscription. The date of the last issue of your current subscription appears to the right of your Force number on the mailing label. Please return the renewal notice in the envelope provided. Renewal fees: \$5.00 regular, \$6.00 first class postage (\$6.00 Canada, \$7.00 Foreign). Membership or renewal fees for Canada or non UK/European Foreign members must be submitted as international bank drafts or money orders payable in U.S. currency.

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### Force Numbers

All member force numbers (except UK/Europe) will change with either the November or February issue of BT. The Rebel Alliance has kindly requested that we incorporate a new identification system which will improve Fan Club services. It will change whenever you move, thus making it easier for the Rebel Alliance to keep track of you. Please include this number, along with your full name and address whenever you write to us. Whenever possible, please enclose a SASE.





## PEN PALS from Yugoslavia to California

In February of 1981, I wrote the STAR WARS Fan Club pen pal service requesting that they match me with a STAR WARS fan in another country. A month later, I received an information sheet on Jana Logar from Yugoslavia. Despite the fact that I don't know a word of Slovene, Jana and I corresponded regularly in English which fortunately she knows quite well. Through our letters we discovered that we had a lot in common and we became good friends.

Well, in July of 1983, Jana visited me and my family in California for four weeks. In that time, we both had a ball, eating Big Macs and STAR WARS cookies, taking photos inside huge American shopping malls and, naturally, going to see RETURN OF THE JEDI many times. With us, Jana was fortunate to visit San Francisco, Boston and New York City. We walked the span of the Golden Gate Bridge, and we rode the swan boats in the Boston Common Gardens. The highlight of Jana's trip however, came on her last night in New

York when she met Mark Hamill following his performance in "Amadeus".

In America, Jana was able to sample different cultures and lifestyles. Aside from the more than twenty JEDI items, Jana took home some very special memories. Jana, "I spent a month in America that I will never forget. Never! I hope I could do it again someday."

Now that Jana and I have actually met, our ten-page letters are bound to become even longer! Thanks OSWFC for bringing us together.

■ Suzy Sansom

## from California to Minnesota USA

**H**i! I had to write to you to tell you about myself, (Shaud Conrad) and Mark Gergis. First of all, you lined up Mark and me for pen pals. I'm very glad you did that! You see, Mark and I have been writing to each other for over two and a half years now! I want to tell you how much we appreciate you putting us together. After communicating by swapping

PREVIEW OF SPRING 1984 ISSUE: INTERVIEW: ROBERT WATTS  
INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM  
PREMIERE, LUCASFILM NEWS, PROFILE,  
PEN PALS . . . and more

Official Star Wars Fan Club  
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P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, Ca 94912, U.S.A.



cassette tapes, letters and phone calls we finally met each other for the first time on July 17, 1983. Mark Gergis flew from Lafayette, California to visit me in Eden Valley, Minnesota.

While Mark was here I received my JEDI Kit! We spent our time bicycling around town, going to see RETURN OF THE JEDI and talking about the STAR WARS Saga. I have plans to visit Mark in the near future. We are the best of friends.

Remember, the STAR WARS Fan Club rules forever and ever! P.S. The Force will be with you always!

■ Shaun Conrad

Suzy, and Shaun, Thanks! for sharing your pen pal experience with everyone.

Since the pen pal service has been in operation, the Fan Club staff has matched up thousands of STAR WARS pen pals. If you have an interesting pen pal story and would like to share it with us, send your story along with good photos to: Pen Pal Column, STAR WARS Fan Club, P.O. Box 2202, San Rafael, CA 94912 U.S.A.

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